



Rural
VIOLENT CRIME
REDUCTION INITIATIVE

Handling Sensitive Investigations in Rural Communities: Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence Cases

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Webinar Logistics

- Webinar is being recorded
- Webinar evaluation
- Questions and Answers



Presenters



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Agenda

- Review how sensitive cases may be handled differently in rural versus urban communities
- Learn how to navigate the “small town” relationships that may impact a sensitive investigation
- Discuss effective victim-centered and trauma-informed responses
- Learn how to engage with the various partners who may be involved
- Questions and Answers

Law Enforcement Response to Sensitive Investigations

Rural vs. Urban Resources

- Victim Cooperation
- Availability of Resources
 - Lack of Shelters
 - Hotel Provision

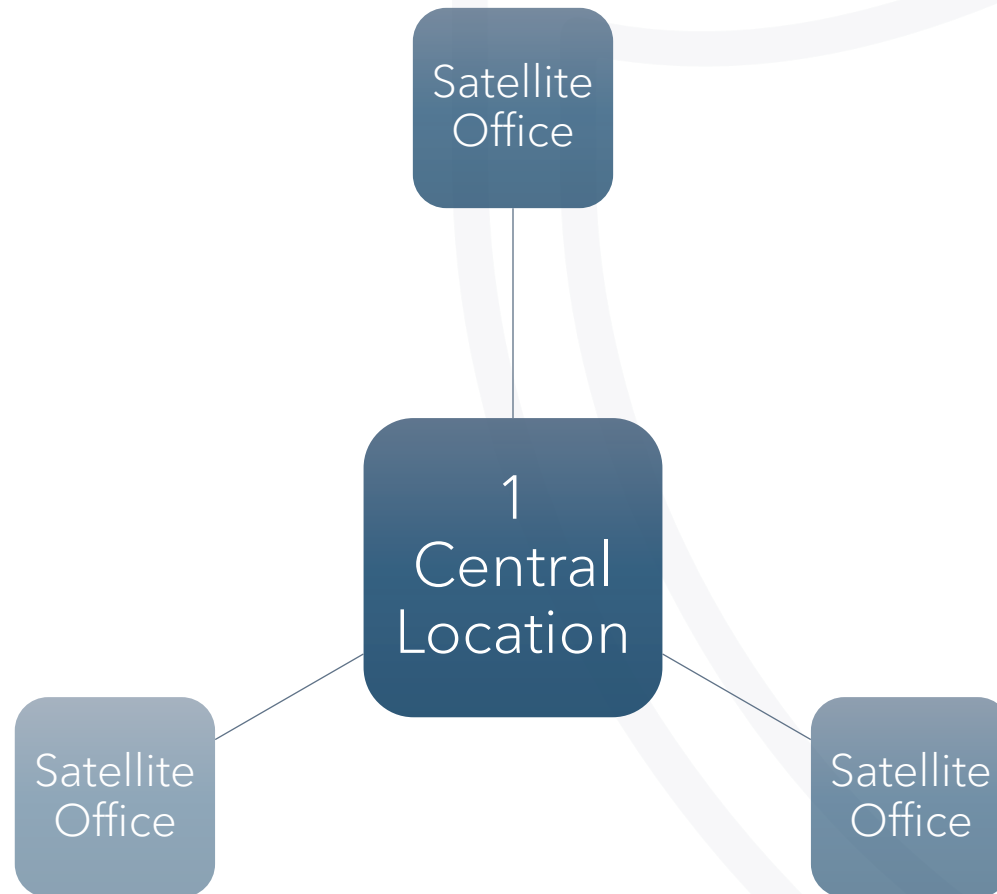


Examples for Social Media Advocacy

- Arkansas during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- California Safe House



Child Advocacy Centers Location



“Small Town” Relationships Affect on Sensitive Investigations

Jury Selection

- Often pull in multiple sets of jurors (2-3) to be able to seat the jury

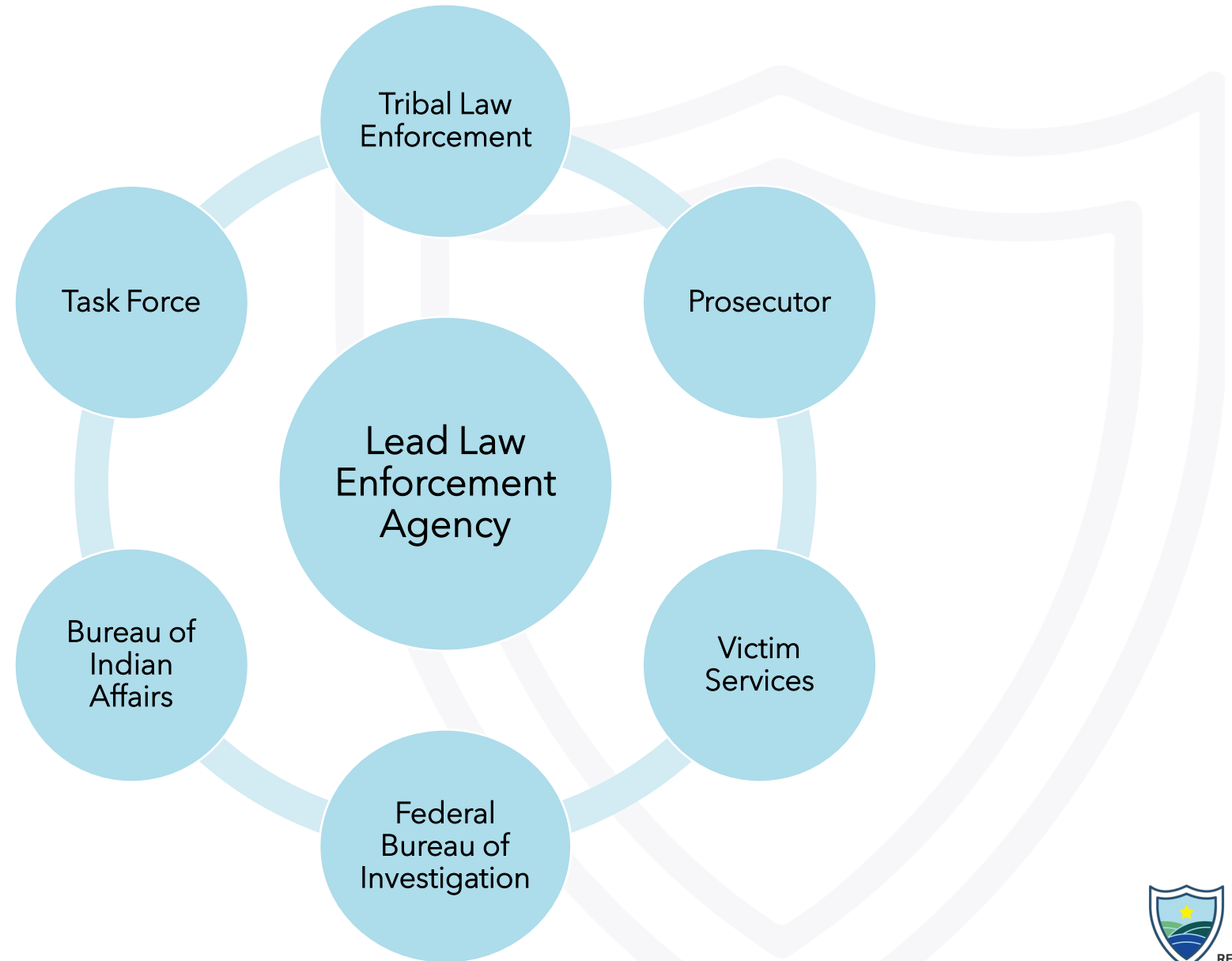


Best Practices for Implementing a Victim-Centered and Trauma- Informed Approach

Best Practices for Implementing a Victim-Centered and Trauma-Informed Approach

- Engage with the victim and build a mutual respect
- The victim IS more important than anything else in your investigation
- Have a commitment to cultural proficiency
 - A victim of any culture should feel welcome

Partners



Victim's Rights

- Every state has a victim's bill of rights
 - Use it
 - Read it
 - Know it
- [Victim Law](#)



Prosecution Response to Sensitive Investigations

Rural Communities

Issues in Rural Investigations



- “Everyone knows everyone”
- Relationships = bias, motive, sources
- Witnesses
- Jurors

“Everyone knows Everyone”

- Strategies:
 - Gather information early (family trees, relationships)
 - Interviews & victim discussions
 - Past incidents/history
 - Ask victims about defense witnesses
 - Especially communications!



Interactions in the Community

- Easy to run into each other
- Sometimes frequent run-ins may result in victim influence or intimidation
- Sometimes through third parties



Interactions in the Community



- Strategies:
 - Talk to victim early
 - Court release orders
 - Jail calls
 - Text messages
 - Protective orders
 - Revocation of release

News Travels Fast



- “Small news is big news”
- These kinds of cases will make people talk
- Unavoidable

News Travels Fast

- Strategies
 - Can't stop, but don't contribute
 - Some filings can be sealed, check the law in your jurisdiction
 - Monitor communications of case participants
 - Ask who they have talked to about the case
 - Discuss early with your victim



Victim-centered Approach



- Team meetings with victims should:
 - Include law enforcement, staff, victim advocate, prosecutor
 - Be face-to-face if possible
 - NOT TALK ABOUT FACTS (unless needed)

Victim-centered: Safety



- Plan to prevent contact
 - Court orders
 - Safe place to stay
- Plan if there is contact
 - Contact law enforcement
 - Bring before the court
- Resources
 - Safe house, food, clothing, YOU

Victim-centered: Guidance

- Surprise is the enemy
 - What to expect long-term
 - What to expect at each hearing
- Explain victims' rights
- Explain legal alternatives
 - What is a plea agreement
 - What is trial like?
- What are the challenges?
- How can they contact you with questions?



Law Enforcement Partnerships

- Tribal, Federal, State, County
- Meet with them
 - Show them you care
 - Avoid calling last-minute/urgent
 - Two-way street



RVCRI TTA Request

No cost tailored training and technical assistance for RVCRI grantees!

Home >

TTA Request

Have a TTA request? Please complete and submit the form below.
The RVCRI team offers expert training and technical assistance (TTA) to grantees upon request. Our team is ready to provide the insights needed to address specific challenges grantees may face. We can also assist grantees in establishing, implementing, and measuring the success of their violent crime reduction plans.

Topic areas include but are not limited to:

- Implementing community engagement strategies
- Implementing problem-solving models and problem-oriented policing
- Strengthening collaborative partnerships
- Enhancing crime analysis capacity
- Hiring and deploying personnel
- Purchasing and deploying technology

After your request has been submitted it will be reviewed by the RVCRI team. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Requesting Agency Information

Requestor Name *(Required)*

Position *(Required)*

Agency/Department *(Required)*

Telephone *(Required)*

Email *(Required)*



Questions?

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